

STATUS OF THE SOUTHWEST BORDERS ERADICATION PROGRAM

Texas Animal Health Commission

Southwest Animal Health Research Foundation

United States Department of Agriculture

February 1, 1964

Since inception in February 1961, the basic objectives of the Southwest Borders Eradication Program have been "to initiate the program to evaluate the feasibility of establishing an artificial barrier zone of sterile reservoirs along the United States border and to eliminate flies in Eastern New Mexico, Texas and areas in states to the north and east of Texas." These basic objectives may properly be divided into two parts: (1) the elimination of the reservoirs in New Mexico, Texas and areas in the states north and east of this eradication area, (2) the evaluation of the feasibility of establishing an artificial barrier zone of sterile flies along the Mexico-United States border. Both objectives have received attention concurrently during the past two years with encouraging results.

The first of these basic objectives, the elimination of the reservoirs from the overwintering areas in New Mexico, Texas and areas in the states north and east of this eradication area, has been attained. Although there were varying numbers of cases during

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Since inception in February 1962, the basic objectives of the Southwest Screwworm Eradication Program have been "to initiate the program to evaluate the feasibility of establishing an artificial barrier zone of sterile screwworm flies along the Mexico-United States Border and to eliminate flies in Eastern New Mexico, Texas and areas in states to the north and east of Texas." These basic objectives may properly be divided into two parts: (1) the elimination of the screwworm in New Mexico, Texas and areas in the states north and east of this eradication area, (2) the evaluation of the feasibility of maintaining an artificial barrier zone of sterile flies along the Mexico-United States Border. Both objectives have received attention concurrently during the past two years with encouraging results.

The first of these basic objectives, the elimination of the screwworm from the overwintering areas in New Mexico, Texas and areas in the states north and east of this eradication area, has been attained. Although there were varying numbers of cases during

the preceding year, there have been no confirmed cases since mid-December. A careful study of these cases has shown convincingly that they entered from outside the area. Likewise, similar cases will occur during the coming year. However, each case can be effectively suppressed as in the past year.

The attainment of the second objective to establish and evaluate the feasibility of maintaining an artificial barrier zone of sterile screwworm flies along the Mexico-United States Border to prevent reinfestation of the areas freed of the screwworm, has been more difficult.

On the basis of information available at the beginning of the program in the Southwest, it was believed that a barrier approximately 50 to 75 miles wide would be adequate. However, tests during the past year have shown that a screwworm fly can migrate at least 180 miles during its lifetime--more than twice as far as previously considered likely. This new knowledge demonstrated the need to adjust the protective barrier zone to a width of at least 200 miles by extending program operations deeper into Mexico. Consequently, during the past year it has been necessary to operate a barrier zone of varying intensity and width. The zone had to be modified according to seasons and climatic conditions. We will have to continue to modify the barrier zone as situations dictate.

While the operation of the barrier zone has not kept all infestations out of the area, as noted above, it has been effective in preventing establishment of a self-perpetuating population in the area. Experience has shown that such a zone can be effectively maintained. We think, therefore, that the second objective has been attained.

An evaluation of what has been accomplished and what is in prospect for the future clearly shows that a barrier zone similar to the one now in operation will be required. Although the barrier may be improved by pushing some parts of it further into Mexico, the financial and other requirements of the operation, at least during the fiscal year 1965, will be as great as those committed for this year's operation.

